Shapur II

(c. 309 – c. 379)

BRIEFING

Shapur II (Middle Persian: 𐭱𐭧𐭯𐭥𐭥𐭩 Šābuhr, 309–379), also known as Shapur the Great, was the tenth King of Kings (Shahanshah) of Sasanian Iran. He took the title at birth and held it until his death at age 70, making him the longest-reigning monarch in Iranian history. He was the son of Hormizd II (r. 302–309).

His reign saw the military resurgence of the country and the expansion of its territory, which marked the start of the first Sasanian golden era. Thus, along with Shapur I, Kavad I and Khosrow I, he is regarded as one of the most illustrious Sasanian kings. His three direct successors, on the other hand, were less successful. At the age of 16, he launched enormously successful military campaigns against Arab insurrections and tribes.

Shapur II pursued a harsh religious policy. Under his reign, the collection of the Avesta, the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism, was completed, heresy and apostasy were punished, and Christians were persecuted. The latter was a reaction against the Christianization of the Roman Empire by Constantine the Great. Shapur II, like Shapur I, was amicable towards Jews, who lived in relative freedom and gained many advantages in his period (see also Rava). At the time of Shapur's death, the Sasanian Empire was stronger than ever, with its enemies to the east pacified and Armenia under Sasanian control.

ETYMOLOGY

Shapur was a popular name in Sasanian Iran, being used by three Sasanian monarchs and other notables of the Sasanian era. Derived from Old Iranian *xšayaθiya.puθra 'son of a king', it must initially have been a title, which became—at least in the late 2nd century AD—a personal name. It appears in the list of Arsacid kings in some Arabic-Persian sources; however, this is anachronistic. Shapur is rendered variously in other languages: Greek Sapur, Sabour and Sapuris; Latin Sapores and Sapor; Arabic Sābur and Šābur; New Persian Šāpur, Šāhpur, Šahfur.

ACCESSION

When Hormizd II died in 309, he was succeeded by his son Adur Narseh, who, after a brief reign which lasted few months, was killed by some of the nobles of the empire. They then blinded Hormizd's second son, and imprisoned the third (Hormizd, who afterwards escaped to the Roman Empire). The throne was reserved for another one of Hormizd II's children, Shapur II; some sources say that Shapur was born forty days after his father's death while others say that he was infant at the time. A legend exists that Shapur was crowned while still unborn, with the crown being placed upon his pregnant mother's womb. This story was known to Western historians such as Agathias (6th century), who writes that the magi had prophesied that the child would be a boy. Modern historians C. E. Bosworth and Alireza Shapour Shahbazi consider this story to be fictional. The sex of the infant could not have been known before Shapur's birth, writes Bosworth. The crowning of the infant Shapur after the elimination of his older brothers was a means for the nobility and priesthood to gain greater control of the empire. They maintained their control until 325, when Shapur reached maturity at the age of sixteen.

WAR WITH THE ARABS

During the childhood of Shapur II, Arab nomads raided the Sasanian homeland of Pars, particularly the district of Ardashir-Khwarrah and the shore of the Persian Gulf. At the age of 16, Shapur II led an expedition against the Arabs; primarily campaigning against the Iyad tribe in Asoristan and thereafter he crossed the Persian Gulf, reaching al-Khatt, modern Qatif, or present eastern Saudi Arabia. He then attacked the Banu Tamim in the Hajar Mountains. Shapur II reportedly killed a large number of the Arab population and destroyed their water supplies by stopping their wells with sand.

After having dealt with the Arabs of eastern Arabia, he continued his expedition into western Arabia and Syria, where he attacked several cities—he even went as far as Medina. Supposedly because of his cruel way of dealing with the Arabs, piercing the shoulders of captives, he was called Dhu'l-Aktaf ("the man with the shoulders") by them. However, Theodor Nöldeke considered this a later folkloric explanation of an honorary epithet meaning "the man with the broad shoulders", i.e., capable of bearing the weight of kingship. Not only did Shapur II pacify the Arabs of the Persian Gulf, but he also pushed many Arab tribes further deep into the Arabian Peninsula. Furthermore, he also deported some Arab tribes by force; the Taghlib to Bahrain and al-Khatt; the Banu Abdul Qays and Banu Tamim to Hajar; the Banu Bakr to Kirman, and the Banu Hanzalah to a place near Hormizd-Ardashir. Shapur II, in order to prevent the Arabs from making more raids into his country, ordered the construction of a wall near al-Hira, which became known as war-i tāzigān ("wall of the Arabs").

The Zoroastrian scripture Bundahishn also mentions the Arabian campaign of Shapur II:

> *During the rulership of Shapur (II), the son of Hormizd, the Arabs came; they took Khorig Rudbar; for many years with contempt (they) rushed until Shapur came to rulership; he destroyed the Arabs and took the land and destroyed many Arab rulers and pulled out many number of shoulders.*

With Eastern Arabia more firmly under Sasanian control, and with the establishment of Sasanian garrison troops, the way for Zoroastrianism was opened. Pre-Islamic Arabian poets often makes mention of Zoroastrian practices, which they must have made contact with either in Asoristan or Eastern Arabia. The Lakhmid ruler Imru' al-Qays ibn 'Amr, who was originally a vassal of the Sasanians, may have suffered from Shapur II's raids in Peninsula. He seemingly swore fealty to the Romans, possibly after the incident.

In the accounts of the historians regarding Shapur's campaign against the Arab lands, as well as his mistreatment of the Arabs, the burning of cities, and the flooding of water sources, there are undoubtedly significant exaggerations. These embellishments stem from Persian sources that have been greatly overstated. However, the Roman historians' narratives about this event do not support this claim.

THE ARAB CAMPAIGN

The Shapur II's Arab campaign took place in 325, against numerous Arab tribes, due to the Arab incursions into the Sasanian Empire. Shapur II defeated all the Arab tribes during his campaign

Arab incursions

During the childhood of Shapur II, Arab nomads made several incursions into the Sasanian homeland of Pars, where they raided Gor and its surroundings. Furthermore, they also made incursions into Meshan and Mazun.

Shapur II’s campaign

At the age of 16, Shapur II led an expedition against the Arabs. According to al-Tabari, he hand-picked 1,000 cavalrymen for the campaign, a possible reference to the pushtigban unit. He primarily campaigned against the Iyad tribe in Asoristan and thereafter he crossed the Persian Gulf, reaching al-Khatt, a region between present-day Bahrain and Qatar. He then attacked the Banu Tamim in Hajar mountains.

After having dealt with the Arabs of eastern Arabia, he continued his expedition into western Arabia and Syrian Desert, Furthermore, he also deported some Arab tribes by force; the Taghlib to Bahrain and al-Khatt; the Banu Abdul Qays and Banu Tamim to Hajar; the Banu Bakr to Kirman, and the Banu Hanzalah to a place near Hormizd-Ardashir.

The Zoroastrian scripture Bundahishn also mentions the Arabian campaign of Shapur II, where it says the following: "During the rulership of Shapur (II), the son of Hormizd, the Arabs came; they took Khorig Rūdbār; for many years with contempt (they) rushed until Shapur came to rulership.

Colonies of Persian officials and soldiers were settled in new garrisons along the Arabian coastlands of the Persian Gulf, especially in Oman's strategic coast in Al Batinah Region, including the tip of the Musandam Peninsula, Sohar, and Rustaq.

In order to prevent the Arabs to make more raids into his country, Shapur II ordered the construction of a defensive line near al-Hira, which became known as Wall of the Arabs (Middle Persian: war ī tāzīgān, in Arabic: خندق سابور "Ditch of Shapur", khandaq Sābūr).

In the accounts of the historians regarding Shapur's campaign against the Arab lands and his approach near the city, as well as his mistreatment of the Arabs, the burning of cities, and the flooding of water sources, there are undoubtedly significant exaggerations. These embellishments stem from Persian sources that have been greatly overstated. However, the "Roman historians" narratives about this event do not support this claim.

Sources mention that Shapur was given the title "Dhū al-Aktāf" because he supposedly dislocated the shoulders of the Arabs. However, Theodor Nöldeke believed that this explanation was fabricated. According to him, the title originally had a different meaning in Sasanian culture, unrelated to shoulder dislocation. Instead, "Dhū al-Aktāf" meant "the one with shoulders," symbolizing strength and power. He argued that later historians reinterpreted the title to fit the narrative of Shapur’s harsh treatment of the Arabs.

WAR WITH THE ROMANS

OBJECTIVES

Ever since the "humiliating" Peace of Nisibis concluded between Shapur's grandfather Narseh and the Roman emperor Diocletian in 298, the borders between the two empires had changed largely in favor of the Romans, who in the treaty received a handful of provinces in Mesopotamia, changing the border from the Euphrates to the Tigris, close to the Sasanian capital of Ctesiphon. The Romans also received control over the kingdoms of Iberia and Armenia, and gained control over parts of upper Media in Iran proper. Shapur's primary objective was thus to nullify the treaty, which he spent much of his reign trying to accomplish.

Another cause for Shapur's wars against the Romans was their attempts to meddle in the domestic affairs of the Sasanian Empire and hurt Shapur's kingship by supporting his brother Hormizd, who had been well received at the Roman court by Constantine the Great and made a cavalry commander. Shapur had made fruitless attempts to satisfy his brother, even having his wife sent to him, who had originally helped him escape imprisonment. However, Hormizd had already become an avid philhellene during his stay with the Romans, with whom he felt at home. Another reason was Constantine's declaration of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire in 337. He had also declared himself the defender of all the Christians in the world, including those living in the Sasanian realm.

EARLY CAMPAIGNS

In 337, after the accession of Constantius II to the Roman throne, Shapur II, provoked by the Roman rulers' backing of Armenia and the Armenian kingdom's earlier conversion to Christianity, broke the peace concluded in 298 between Narseh (293–302) and Diocletian (284–305), which had been observed for forty years. Most of the fighting during this campaign occurred in Roman Mesopotamia, where Roman fortifications impeded the Persian advance. Nevertheless, Shapur was able to take some forts, such as Vitra. Persian forces also devastated Armenia and captured and blinded the Armenian king Tiran, perhaps in 350. Shapur besieged the Roman fortress city of Nisibis in Mesopotamia thrice (in 338, 346, and 350) and was repulsed each time. During this campaign, the sole engagement between the sides' main armies was the Battle of Singara (modern-day Sinjar, Iraq) in 344, where Persian forces feinted a retreat and inflicted significant losses on the Roman army. Neither side managed to achieve a decisive advantage, and an invasion of Central Asian nomads in the east forced Shapur to abandon his campaign against Rome by 350. These nomads were likely the Kidarites, who were threatening the Gupta Empire (320–500 CE) in India at the same time. After an extended campaign against the nomads, Shapur forced their king, Grumbates, into an alliance, thus gaining a new ally against the Romans. In particular, Grumbates's forces joined the Persians in the Siege of Amida in 359.

Perso-Roman wars of 337 - 361

The Perso-Roman wars of 337–361 were a series of military conflicts fought between the Roman Empire and the Sasanian Empire between 337 and 361. They were a result of long-standing competition between the rival powers over influence in the border kingdoms of Armenia and Iberia, as well as the desire of Shapur II, after his Arab campaign, to revoke the unfavorable terms of the Treaty of Nisibis, which had concluded the previous war between the empires. Though the Romans under Constantius II were defeated in several sanguinary encounters, Shapur was unable to secure a decisive victory.

First war: 337-350

In 335, Emperor Constantine sent his son Constantius in preparation for a campaign against the Sasanid Empire. Constantius recruited and drafted new soldiers, implemented training and drills, expanded the cavalry, and stockpiled supplies. These preparations did not go unnoticed by the Sasanids. In 336, Shapur II sent his general Narses to invade Armenia. Narses, however, was defeated and killed at Narasara. Following Constantine the Great's death, Shapur besieged Nisibis, which was then regarded as the key to Mesopotamia. After sixty days, no closer to taking Nisibis and with a plague hampering his army, he lifted the siege and returned to Persia. Although he lost at Nisibis, Shapur collected tribute from the Armenian king Khosrov starting in the year 345–6.

In 343–4, Constantius met Shapur's forces near Singara or Alaina. The date of this battle is uncertain. Sources are divided as to the victor of the battle. Some sources state a Sasanian victory, some a Roman victory, while another states a pyrrhic Roman victory.

In 346–7 Shapur besieged Nisibis a second time, and was repulsed.

In 348, a Sasanian army invaded Roman Mesopotamia and marched on Singara. The fortress city was either besieged or blockaded. While the Sasanians camped around Singara, the Romans launched a nighttime raid on their camp, killing many Sasanian soldiers in their sleep. This disrupted Shapur's 348 campaign. The Sasanian army retreated to their own territory.

In 350, Shapur laid siege to Nisibis, for a third time. The dams of the river Mygdonius, which passed near the valley in which Nisibis was located, were broken down, and the valley flooded. When the whole plain was filled with water up to the walls of the city, a Sasanid fleet was embarked and floated to the ramparts. A part of the walls collapsed and the Sasanids withdrew in preparation for the assault. The attack which was launched, supported by Sasanid war-elephants, bogged down in the muddy waters formed by the lake, and Shapur gave the signal to fall back. In the interval of a single night the defenders effected the repair of the walls, this along with news of Hunnic invasions of the eastern provinces, compelled Shapur to a cessation of hostilities against Rome. Before retreating to Persia, Shapur burned all his siege equipment and executed some of his chief officers and advisors.

The usurpation of Magnentius in the west occurred around the same time diverting Constantius, who left his cousin Gallus to defend the east.

Interwar: 350-359

During 350-359 the war between the Roman and Sasanid Empires languished. Constantius was engaged in several campaigns against enemies, both foreign and domestic, while Shapur was occupied with his eastern campaign in the steppes of Central Asia.

In 356, however, the Romans made serious overtures towards a lasting peace. Shapur delivered his conditions to the following effect: that should Constantius deliver up the provinces of Mesopotamia and Armenia, which Diocletian had wrested from Narseh under the Treaty of Nisibis. Constantius, though discredited by previous defeats, and even himself secretly doubtful of the outcome of a second war, treated the offer with contempt. Yet, he dispatched civil and military officers accompanied by a sophist on a new embassy to the Sasanid court, advising Shapur II of the necessity of more reasonable grounds for peace. The embassy was dismissed by Shapur when he arrived at Ctesiphon and preparations were conducted for another campaign.

Second war: 359-361

In 359, Shapur II launched a large scale invasion into Roman Mesopotamia. During this campaign he was assisted by the Roman turncoat Antoninus who had critical knowledge of the Roman defences. With most of the eastern tribes (including the Chionites) now supporting his army, Shapur crossed the Tigris at Nineveh and marched to Singara which he stormed or blockaded. He then marched to Bebase, a major road junction on the Khabur River. From there he could threatened Nisibis to the east and Zeugma, where the main bridge across the Euphrates was located, to the west. He surprised general Ursicinus, whose headquarters was in Nisibis, by suddenly marching toward the Amida to the north.

As soon as Ursicinus' spies, including later historian Ammianus Marcellinus, had informed him the Sasanian army had crossed the Tigris, he secured the defenses of Nisibis and proceeded to Amida. After giving orders for the fields of Roman Mesopotamia to be burned to prevent Shapur's army using it as fodder, the population took refuge in the fortified city. With Shapur's crossing of the Tigris secured, Ursicinus fell back to Amida, from which he could harass the Sasanians if they besieged Nisibis or threaten their lines of communication and supply in case they marched west. After setting up his headquarters at Amida, Ursicinus retreated to oversee the defense of the Euphrates.

Six Roman legions: V Parthica, XXX Ulpia Victrix, Magnentius, Decentius, Superventores and Praeventores and a detachment (vexillation) of X Fortenses had been gathered at Amida and took up its defence. The legions Magnentius, Decentius and XXX Ulpia Victrix were remnants of the army of the usurper Magnentius, and had been sent east by Constantius at the end of the civil war. Unlike the other legions in the area, these three legions were made up of Gallic soldiers. The numbers of the Roman force at Amida are a point of debate: Crawford puts them at 20,000, Blockley at 7,000–10,000, and Harrel at 5,300. The army of Shapur reportedly numbered 100,000 men.

Shapur bypassed Nisibis and reached Bebase. From there, his scouts informed him of the flooding of the Euphrates and a strong Roman fortification on the other bank. Faced with this predicament, Antoninus advised the Sasanid monarch to force march his army and cross the Euphrates northwest of Amida. From there Shapur could advance into the interior of Asia Minor. Marching by way of Horre, Miacarire, Carcha, and the fortresses of Reman and Busan which capitulated on his approach, Shapur arrived beneath the walls of Amida at the end of July.

Shapur convinced himself that the mere sight of his formidable army would terrorize the city into surrender. Grumbates, king of the Chionites, was sent to threaten the defiant city into submission. But before the king could make known the reason of his approach, a dart from the Roman ballistae struck his son and crown prince killing him instantly.

The Sasanids encircled the city on every side; as auxiliaries, the Vertae were assigned the assault of the south wall, the Albanians on the north, the Chionites to the east, and the Segestanis with their war-elephants on the west. The operations of the siege began with a two-day mutual discharge of missiles, following heavy casualties on both sides, a truce was concluded. The Sasanids then set themselves to raising mounds for scaling the walls, and siege towers captured from the Romans in the previous war at Singara. Meanwhile, the forays of the Sasanid cavalry were devastating the surrounding country taking many prisoners and much spoil. Ursicinus, who proposed a bold attack using light infantry to divert the Sasanid blockade, was accused of fomenting a treacherous reverse through his excessive zeal for the relief of the city.

A night attack on the Sasanid camp by two Gallic legions from Amida boosted Roman morale and inflicted heavy losses on the Sasanid army, but the loss of 400 Gauls was more devastating to the besieged city. Shapur increased his assaults on the city only to suffer further casualties due to the Roman scorpions and fire darts. Finally the Roman structures, under the bombardment of Sasanid ballistae, collapsed. The Sasanids carried their earth mounds to the level of the ramparts, and swarmed into the city. After a prolonged last-ditch defense the garrison was overpowered, the city sacked and the inhabitants removed to the further reaches of the Sasanid Empire. Count Aelianus and the rest of the surviving Roman commanders were crucified. The siege being successful and autumn arriving, the Sasanids were obliged to return to winter-quarters.

The siege of Amida was a military investment of the Roman fortified frontier city of Amida (modern Diyarbakır, Turkey) by the Sasanian Empire. It took place in AD 359 when the Sasanian army under king Shapur II invaded the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. Shapur wanted to exploit the absence of the Roman Emperor Constantius II who was overseeing affairs in the western part of the Empire. The city fell after a siege of 73 days.

Ammianus Marcellinus, a Roman army officer, provided a vivid description of the siege in his work (Res Gestae). Ammianus served on the staff of Ursicinus, the Magister Equitum (master of horse) of the East, during the events of the siege.

When Shapur II took control of the Sasanian Empire, he sought to regain old territories previously lost to the Roman Empire. After crushing the Arabs in the south, Shapur II had to fight for a decade against invaders called the Xionites. He was successful in his efforts, asserting his dominance over the invaders and securing his eastern borders. The Xionites were forced to conclude a peace, and their king, Grumbates, accompanied Shapur II in the war against the Romans. In 358 the Romans had failed to dissuade Shapur from attacking Mesopotamia, so the next year Shapur decided to invade. Shapur besieged Amida in 359.

Emperor Constantius II had increasingly been doubting the loyalty of General Ursicinus. As a result, he did not give him command of the Roman forces in the East, and instead gave it to Sabinianus. Ursicinus served as Magister Equitum (Master of Horse) while Sabinianus held the rank of Magister Peditum (Master of Foot) of the East.[10] As events unfolded, Ursicinus became the 'de facto' commanding general of the Limitanei armies of Mesopotamia and Osrhoene, while Sabinianus continued as commander of Comitatus (the Field Army) of the East.

As news of the Persian invasion spread, the civilian population of the region began to panic:

> *"Dispatch riders were sent at once to Cassian, the general of Mesopotamiam and Euphronius, then governor of the province, with orders to compel the country folk [farmers] to move with their families and all their livestock to places of safety. Carrhae was to be evacuated immediately, because of the weakness of its fortifications, and the whole country set on fire (see:scorched earth), to deprive the enemy of a source of fodder."*
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> ***—Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae, 18.7***

Several Roman legions gathered at Amida. These included: Legio XXX Ulpia Victrix, Magnentius, Decentius, Superventores, Praeventores and a detachment of Legio X Fretensis. The garrison of Amida itself consisted of Legio V Parthica supported by an unidentified cavalry regiment. Ursicinus probably planned to use Amida as a base of operations against the Persian invasion.

Shapur's plan was to bypass difficult fortress cities like Nisibis and march straight into Syria. The Sassanid Royal Army crossed the Tigris and blockaded or stormed Singara. In response, Ursicinus ordered the Comes Aelianus with five legions to Amida. The Romans wanted to use the city as a base to strike at the Sassanids if they besieged Nisibis or to attack their lines of communication and supply if they moved westwards towards Syria. Ursicinus moved his headquarters to Amida and sent out scouting parties. The Sassanids suddenly marched to Amida, where their vanguard almost captured Ursicinus when he rode out with the cavalry wanting to make sure the bridges across the Euphrates were broken down. After a protracted fight, Ursicinus' cavalry was driven towards the Tigris with Ursicinus and a few men barely escaping. When Shapur and the main army approached Amida, the Sassanids were provoked into attacking the city. This came about when the son of Grumbates, while inspecting the defences of Amida, was shot and killed with an arrow shot by the city garrison. Ammianus described how Grumbates, outraged at his son's death, demanded revenge from the Romans: he compares the death to that of Patroclus at Troy. The Sassanids began the attack with siege towers and attempted to take the city quickly, but were largely unsuccessful.

According to Ammianus Marcellinus

> *The king himself [Shapur II], mounted upon a charger and overtopping the others, rode before the whole army, wearing in place of a diadem a golden image of a ram's head set with precious stones, distinguished too by a great retinue of men of the highest rank and of various nations. But it was clear that he would merely try the effect of a conference on the defenders of the walls, since by the advice of Antoninus he was in haste to go elsewhere.*

According to historian Khodadad Rezakhani, the ruler described by Ammianus Marcellinus, who is not named specifically as Shapur II, could alternatively be the Kidarite ruler Peroz. In particular, Shapur's traditional headgear is a crenellated crown, and is very different from the one described by Ammianus Marcellinus. The headgear with ram's horn would rather correspond to that of Peroz as seen on many of his coins in the Sasanian style. Ammianus Marcellinus also mentions that the king, whom he assumes to be Shapur, was called "Saansaan" and "Pirosen" by the Persians, which could actually refer to "Šāhanšāh Pērōz", the ruler of the eastern Hunnic tribes (Chionites, Gelani, and Sagistani).

Ammianus Marcellinus continues with the account of how he reached the safety of the city just as the Sassanids were descending on the city:

> *I myself, having taken a direction apart from that of my comrades, was looking around to see what to do, when Verennianus, one of the guard, came up with an arrow in his thigh; and while at the earnest request of my colleague I was trying to pull it out, finding myself surrounded on all sides by the advancing Persians, I made up for the delay by breathless speed and aimed for the city, which from the point where we were attacked lay high up and could be approached only by a single very narrow ascent ; and this was made still narrower by mills which had been built on the cliffs for the purpose of making the paths. Here, mingled with the Persians, who were rushing to the higher ground with the same effort as ourselves, we remained motionless until sunrise of the next day, so crowded together that the bodies of the slain, held upright by the throng, could nowhere find room to fall, and that in front of me a soldier with his head cut in two, and split into equal halves by a powerful sword stroke, was so pressed on all sides that he stood erect like a stump.*

The siege took 73 days. Shapur II attempted to capture the city several times but every time it failed. Early in the siege a company of 70 elite Persian foot-archers by aid of a Roman renegade gained entrance to a tower on the south side of the city, which was placed on the bank of the Tigris. The archers then fired precision shots toward the city's interior in coordination with Shapur II's general assault outside the city. The Romans recaptured the tower as the archers ran out of arrows and killed them. At the same time, repeated assaults on the walls were repulsed by the garrison, and many of the Persian siege towers were set on fire. During the siege, plague broke out in Amida but ended after ten days by a light rain.

Cavalry forces were used during the siege, with Albanian cavalry stationing to the city's north, the Sakas of Sakastan to the west, the Chionites to the east, and Shapur II and his "Royal Escort" (possibly the pushtigban) to the south. War elephants were employed to the city's west. The Romans reportedly countered the elephants by hurling flames against their skins. Ammianus mentions the assaults by Shapur II and his cavalry force against the gates, noting that how close the king was to the defenders.

At one point two Gallic legions which were stationed in the city, willing to prove their courage in the fight, and infuriated by the sight of Roman captives being hauled in to the enemy camp by Persian raiders who were devastating the country, persuaded their commanders to allow them to carry out a night attack on the Persian camp. Although a slight noise warned the Persians in time, the Gauls inflicted heavy casualties before retiring in good order within the walls.

Although all their siege towers were destroyed by the employment of the Roman scorpions, they were able to erect mounds of earth against the walls, which the Romans countered by building higher mounds within the circuit of the city, from which to aim their missiles against the Persians on the mounds below. Ultimately, one of the improvised towers of the Romans collapsed under the repeated shocks of the Persian missile-engines. The Persians were thus able to extend their mounds to the ramparts and scale the battlements of the city. Shapur's army made its long-delayed entrance into the fortress, the obstinacy of which was punished by a promiscuous massacre. Aelianus the count, who had directed the defense, with all his principal officers who survived, were subjected to crucifixion.

After the capture of the city, most of the Roman leaders were executed, the city was sacked, the residential areas were destroyed, and the population was deported to Khuzestan province in Persia. Autumn having arrived, the Persians could advance no further. Aside from having spent the campaign season in the reduction of a single city, Shapur II had lost as many as 30,000 in the siege, and his barbarian allies from the east deserted him due to the heavy casualties.

In the following year (360), Shapur II renewed his invasion and captured the key border fortresses Bezabde and Singara, killing and capturing five entire Roman legions, but again suffering high casualties. In spring of the next year Constantius II who had spent the winter in Constantinople recruiting his forces, finally arrived in the east. Shapur's strategy was to refortify and hold on to the fortresses he had captured and avoid a pitched battle. Constantius directed his efforts towards retaking Bezabde, but met an unexpectedly strong resistance; diverted from his purpose by the revolt of Julian which had arisen meanwhile in Gaul, Constantius abandoned the siege at the approach of winter, heading west. He died shortly at Antioch of a fever.

At the accession of Julian, Shapur desired peace. In 363, Emperor Julian, at the head of a strong army, invaded Persia and advanced to take Ctesiphon. But despite a good start to the campaign he was killed in battle on the retreat. His successor Jovian signed a treaty of peace, by which the districts on the Tigris and Nisibis (totalling five Roman provinces) were ceded to the Persians and the Romans relinquished the right to interfere in Armenia.

In spring 360, Shapur renewed his inroads into Mesopotamia, besieging the desert town of Singara. The wall was breached after some days by battering ram, and the town fell. The 1st Flavian and 1st Parthian legions which had formed the garrison, as well as the inhabitants of Singara, were sent into captivity in Sasanid Persia.

Shapur then invested Bazabde, a strong Roman fortress on the Tigris. He lingered only to repair the walls and post a strong garrison in Bazabde before he proceeded on an expedition against Virtha, a formidable fortress on the outliers of the Mesopotamian desert. But the garrison of Virtha defended themselves successfully and Shapur retired over the Tigris towards the end of the campaign season.

In the meantime, towards autumn of 360, Constantius finally arrived at the head of his long-prepared army. The revolt of Julian in Gaul had momentarily delayed the emperor, but his ministers prevailed on him to campaign against the Sasanids. Before crossing the Tigris to face Shapur, Constantius was determined to retake the important fortress of Bazabde. During the ensuing blockade, the Sasanids sallied several times from the city to destroy Roman battering rams and ballistae. With winter beginning, the area was flooded with heavy rains and Constantius' attacks were beaten back, he retreated from Bazabde into Syria and wintered in Antioch.

The following spring 361, Constantius crossed the Euphrates once more, arriving at Edessa. Unwilling to resume the blockade of Bazabde and fearing a costly siege, he sent his two generals, Arbetio and Agilo, to observe the motions of Shapur from the further bank of the Tigris to inform him when the latter should cross the river. Shapur, however, declined to venture over the Tigris and the entire summer of 361 was wasted in ineffectual maneuvering with each monarch on opposite banks of the river. Meanwhile, Constantius had requested reinforcements from Julian in Gaul, the Gallic legions, however, revolted and proclaimed Julian Augustus.

On account of the immediate Sasanid threat, Constantius was unable to directly respond to his cousin's usurpation, other than by sending missives in which he tried to convince Julian to resign the title of Augustus and be satisfied with that of Caesar. Constantius saw no alternative but to face the usurper, and yet the threat of an invasion by Shapur remained. Shapur, however, did not attempt another campaign that year. This temporary respite in hostilities allowed Constantius to turn his full attention to Julian.

The war ended indecisively with Constantius dying of fever on 5 October 361 at Mopsucrene.

Second war against the Romans and invasion of Armenia

In 356, Shapur rejected a peace overture by Constantius, replying that Rome should return Armenia and other territories lost by Persia in the Treaty of Nisibis. In 359, Shapur II invaded southern Armenia and besieged the fortress of Amida (now Diyarbakır, Turkey). He was joined by King Grumbates's forces and other allies. Amida surrendered after a seventy-three-day siege. The city was plundered and its inhabitants were deported to Khuzistan. The delay forced Shapur to halt operations for the winter. Early the following spring he continued his operations against the Roman fortresses, capturing Singara and Bezabde (Cizre?), again at a heavy cost. In the next year Constantius II launched a counterattack, having spent the winter making massive preparations in Constantinople; Shapur, who had meanwhile lost the aid of his Asianic allies, avoided battle, but left strong garrisons in all the fortresses which he had captured. Constantius laid siege to Bezabde, but proved incapable of taking it, and retired on the approach of winter to Antioch, where he died soon after. Constantius was succeeded by his cousin Julian (361–363), who came to the throne determined to avenge the recent Roman reverses in the east. Though Shapur attempted an honorable reconciliation, warned of the capabilities which Julian had displayed in wars against the Alemanni in Gaul, the emperor dismissed negotiation.

In 363 Julian, at the head of a strong army, advanced to Shapur's capital city of Ctesiphon and defeated a presumably larger Sasanian force at the Battle of Ctesiphon; however, he was unable to take the fortified city, or engage with the main Persian army under Shapur II that was approaching. Julian was killed by the enemy in a skirmish during his retreat back to Roman territory. His successor Jovian (363–364) made an ignominious peace in which the districts beyond the Tigris which had been acquired in 298 were given to the Persians along with Nisibis and Singara, and the Romans promised to interfere no more in Armenia. The great success is represented in the rock sculptures near the town Bishapur in Pars (Stolze, Persepolis, p. 141); under the hooves of the king's horse lies the body of an enemy, probably Julian, and a supplicant Roman, the Emperor Jovian, asks for peace.

According to the peace treaty between Shapur and Jovian, Georgia and Armenia were to be ceded to the Sasanians, and the Romans forbidden from further involvement in the affairs of Armenia. The Armenian King Arshak II, who had joined Julian's campaign, was lured to Persia and imprisoned in the Castle of Oblivion (Armenian: berd An(y)ush) in Khuzistan. Shapur destroyed many towns in Armenia and deported their inhabitants to Persia. He persecuted the local Christians, erected fire temples and forced conversion to Zoroastrianism. The Persians were assisted in Armenia by the magnates Meruzhan Artsruni and Vahan Mamikonian, who were made governors of the country and one of whom was given Shapur's own sister in marriage.

However, the Armenian nobles resisted him successfully, secretly supported by the Romans, who sent King Pap, the son of Arshak II, into Armenia. Shapur personally invaded Armenia in response to Pap's return, although Pap was restored to the Armenian throne again with the help of a Roman army in approximately spring 370. Persian forces were defeated by a joint Roman-Armenian army in 371, and an army led by Shapur himself was defeated in another battle on the eastern border of Armenia. Eventually, Pap was suspected of colluding with the Persians and was assassinated in 375 by the order of the Roman emperor Valens. Shapur and Valens negotiated inconclusively over the status of Armenia until 377, and Valens's defeat and death at the Battle of Adrianople in 378 ended Roman presence in Armenia. Armenia was left in peace for the time being. The country was later partitioned between Rome and Persia in 387, under Shapur's son Shapur III.

In Georgia, then known as Iberia, where the Sasanians were also given control, Shapur II installed Aspacures II of Iberia in the east; however, in western Georgia, Valens also succeeded in setting up his own king, Sauromaces II of Iberia.

Shapur II had conducted great hosts of captives from the Roman territory into his dominions, most of whom were settled in Elam. Here he rebuilt Susa—after having killed the city's rebellious inhabitants.

WAR IN THE EAST

EXPANSION INTO INDIA

In the east around 350 CE, Shapur II gained the upper hand against the Kushano-Sasanian Kingdom and took control of large territories in areas now known as Afghanistan and Pakistan, possibly as a consequence of the destruction of the Kushano-Sasanians by the Chionites. The Kushano-Sasanian still ruled in the north. Important finds of Sasanian coinage beyond the Indus river in the city of Taxila only start with the reigns of Shapur II (r. 309–379) and Shapur III (r. 383–388), suggesting that the expansion of Sasanian control beyond the Indus was the result of the wars of Shapur II "with the Chionites and Kushans" from 350 to 358 CE as described by Ammianus Marcellinus. During the last phase of the reign of Shapur II, a Sasanian mint was established south of the Hindu Kush, the role of which was probably to pay local troops. The Sasanians probably maintained control until Bactria fell to the Kidarites under their ruler Kidara around 360 CE, and Kabulistan fell to the Alchon Huns circa 385 CE.

In the area of Sindh, from Multan to the mouth of the Indus river, an important series of gold coins started to be issued on the model of the coinage of Shapur II, and would continue down to Peroz I. The coins are not the usual Sasanian imperial type, and the legend around the portrait tends to be degraded Middle Persian in the Pahlavi script, but they have the Brahmi script character Sri (meaning "Lord") in front of the portrait of the King. The coins suggest some sort of Sasanian control of Sind from the time of Shapur II, and a recognition of Sasanian overlordship, but the precise extent of the Sasanian presence or influence is unknown.

LOSS OF BACTRIA TO NOMADIC INVADERS

Confrontations with nomadic tribes from Central Asia soon started to occur. Ammianus Marcellinus reports that in 356 CE, Shapur II was taking his winter quarters on his eastern borders, "repelling the hostilities of the bordering tribes" of the Chionites and the Euseni ("Euseni" is usually amended to "Cuseni", meaning the Kushans), finally making a treaty of alliance with the Chionites and the Gelani in 358 CE.

From around 360 CE, however, during his reign, the Sasanids lost the control of Bactria to invaders from the north, first the Kidarites, then the Hephthalites and the Alchon Huns, who would follow up with the invasion of India. These invaders initially issued coins based on Sasanian designs. Various coins minted in Bactria and based on a Sasanian designs are known, often with busts imitating Sasanian kings Shapur II (r. 309 to 379 CE) and Shapur III (r. 383 to 388 CE), adding the Alchon Tamgha and the name "Alchono" in Bactrian script on the obverse, and with attendants to a fire altar on the reverse.

DEATH AND SUCCESSION

Shapur died in 379 and was succeeded by his slightly younger brother Ardashir II, who agreed to rule till Shapur's son Shapur III reached adulthood. At the time of Shapur's death, the Sasanian Empire was stronger than it had ever been, and it was also considerably larger than when he came to the throne, the eastern and western enemies were pacified and Persia had gained control over Armenia. He is regarded as one of the most important Sasanian kings along with Shapur I and Khosrow I, and could after a long period of instability regain the old strength of the Empire. His three successors, however, were less successful than he. Furthermore, his death marked the start of a 125-year-long conflict between the wuzurgan, a powerful group of nobility, and the kings, who both struggled for power over Iran.

RELIGIOUS POLICY

Under Shapur II's reign, the collection of the Avesta was completed, heresy and apostasy punished, and the Christians persecuted (see Abdecalas, Acepsimas of Hnaita and Abda of Kashkar). This was a reaction against the Christianization of the Roman Empire by Constantine.

According to Armenian and primary sources, the Sasanian shahs revered the sun and the moon, with Roman sources stating that Shapur II asserted to be the "brother of the Sun and the Moon" (Latin: frater Solis et Lunae). This is however not mentioned in Sasanian sources, which implies that there are two possibilities; one that it is regarding about the angelic divinity Mithra, whilst the other one being that it may be an Indo-Iranian characteristic where the shahs considered their ancestors descendants of Manuchehr (Indic Manu) and his father Wiwahvant (Indic Vivasvant), who were in India associated with the Moon and the Sun.

Shapur's own religious beliefs do not seem to have been very strict; he restored the family cult of Anahita in Istakhr and was possibly an adherent of Zurvanism as well as promoting the official orthodox variant of Zoroastrianism.

Towards Christians

Initially, Shapur II was not hostile to his Christian subjects, who were led by Shemon Bar Sabbae, the Patriarch of the Church of the East. However, the conversion of Constantine the Great to Christianity caused Shapur to start distrusting his Christian subjects. He started seeing them as agents of a foreign enemy. The wars between the Sasanian and Roman empires turned Shapur's mistrust into hostility. After the death of Constantine, Shapur II, who had been preparing for a war against the Romans for several years, imposed a double tax on his Christian subjects to finance the conflict. Shemon, however, refused to pay the double tax. Shapur started pressuring Shemon and his clergy to convert to Zoroastrianism, which they refused to do. It was during this period the 'cycle of the martyrs' began during which 'many thousands of Christians' were put to death. During the following years, Shemon's successors, Shahdost and Barba'shmin, were also martyred.

Barbasceminus, bishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon from 342, was executed on 14 January 346 with sixteen of his clergy.[55] A near-contemporary fifth-century Christian work, the Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen, contains considerable detail on the Persian Christians martyred under Shapur II. Sozomen estimates the total number of Christians killed as follows:

> *The number of men and women whose names have been ascertained, and who were martyred at this period, has been computed to be upwards of sixteen thousand, while the multitude of martyrs whose names are unknown was so great that the Persians, the Syrians, and the inhabitants of Edessa, have failed in all their efforts to compute the number.*
>
> ***—Sozomen, in his Ecclesiastical History, Book II, Chapter XIV***

Martyrs of Persia under Shapur II

The Martyrs of Persia under Shapur II were Christian martyrs who were put to death by Shapur II of Persia (r. 309–379) for failing to renounce their faith. Historical accounts suggest that approximately 16,000 Christians may have been martyred during this period. They are remembered collectively in the Roman and Orthodox calendars, with the Roman Martyrology listing feast days on April 6, April 22, and May 9 for different groups of martyrs.

The standard view of early Christianity in Persia is that it was tolerated until Constantine the Great (r. 306–337) was converted to Christianity and made it the official religion of the Roman Empire. Shapur II then became suspicious of Christians in his empire, and after being defeated in a war with Rome ordering that the Christian churches be destroyed and their clergy executed. This was later extended to execution of all Christians. This view is based on Syriac accounts of martyrdoms, but these may have been written some time after the events, and may present only the Roman viewpoint.

The theme of Shapur's persecution being a reaction to Constantine's conversion emerged only during the reign of Theodosius II (r. 402–450), and must be treated with some skepticism. However, there is no doubt that Shapur II severely persecuted the Christians from 339 until his death in 379, and the 5th-century Syriac Passions most likely were the source for Sozomenos's account in his Ecclesiastical History, and have been carried forward into Greek translations.

Sozomen (c. 400–450 AD) wrote in his Ecclesiastical History, Chapter XIV - Conduct and martyrdom of Milles the Bishop, multitude of bishops slain in Persia by Sapor, besides obscure individuals,

> *I shall briefly state that the number of men and women whose names have been ascertained, and who were martyred at this period, has been computed to be upwards of sixteen thousand, while the multitude of martyrs whose names are unknown was so great that the Persians, the Syrians, and the inhabitants of Edessa, have failed in all their efforts to compute the number.*

The Monks of Ramsgate wrote in their Book of Saints (1921),

> *Persia (Martyrs of) (SS.) (April 6)*
> *(4th cent.) One hundred Christian soldiers, for the most part Greeks, made prisoners by the Persian King Sapor II in his war with the emperor Constantius. They were all put to the sword by the Pagans and have since been venerated as martyrs.*

Persia (Martyrs of) (SS.) (April 22)
(4th cent.) On April 22 the Roman Church commemorates the Passion of a vast number of Christians, massacred in Persian under King Sapor II on Good Friday. A.D. 380. Among them were Milles, Acepsimas, Mareas, Bicor and twenty other Bishops, about two hundred and fifty priests and deacons, and very many monks and nuns.

Persia (Martyrs of) (SS.) (May 9)
(Date uncertain.) The Martyrologies register for May 9: "In Persia three hundred and ten Martyrs"; but give no indication of date. It is conjectured that they suffered in the fourth century under the persecuting King Sapor II, but nothing certain is known about this group. An old Persian writer estimates the Persian Martyrs during the reign of Sapor II at two thousand. This estimate may be considered as quite moderate. Sozomen the historian reckons them to have numbered sixteen thousand; but that the total was (as some assert) two hundred thousand seems exaggerated.

Aithelas (St.) M. (April 22)
(4th cent.) One of the band of Persian Martyrs of which the leader was St. Abdiesus.

Azadenes (St.) M. (April 22)
(4th cent.) A deacon among the Martyrs of Persia, venerated on this day with St. Abdiesus, St. Azades, &c. They suffered under King Sapor II (A.D.341).

Barbasceminus and others (SS.) MM. (Jan. 14)
(4th cent.) Barbasceminus, Bishop of Seleucia, was one of the most distinguished of the Persian Martyrs of the fourth century under the persecuting King Sapor II. The contemporary writer, St. Maruthas, has left us a vivid account of his sufferings and of those who with him gave their lives for Christ.

Daniel and Verda (SS.) Martyrs (Feb. 21)
(4th cent.) Persian Martyrs, greatly honoured in the East, who suffered under King Sapor II (A.D. 344).

Jonas, Barachisius and others (SS.) MM. (March 29)
King Sapor II of Persia, in the eighteenth year of his reign, raised a fierce persecution against the Christians. Among the sufferers were the two brothers, Jonas and Barachisius of the city of Beth-Asa. While travelling about and encouraging the Christians of his neighbourhood (nine of whom received the Crown of Martyrdom), they were arrested and after bravely enduring every form of torture, laid down their lives for Christ's sake. They died A.D.327.

Sapor, Isaac and others (SS.) MM. (Nov. 30)
(4th cent.) A band of Martyrs in Persia who endured savage torture and in the end were beheaded under Sapor II, the persecuting monarch (A.D. 339).

The Roman Martyrology includes:

6th April ... In Persia, 120 blessed martyrs, in 345.

22nd April. The same day, many holy martyrs who, the year following the death of Saint Simeon, and on the anniversary of the Passion of our Lord, were put to the sword for the name of Christ throughout Persia, under king Sapor. Among those who then suffered for the faith were the eunuch Azades, a favorite of the king; Milles, a bishop renowned for sanctity and miracles; the bishop Acepsimas, with one of his priests named James ; also Aithalas and Joseph, priests; Azadan and Abdiesus, deacons, and many other clerics ; Mareas and Bicor, bishops, with twenty other bishops, and nearly two hundred and fifty clerics; many monks and consecrated virgins, among whom was the sister of Saint Simeon, called Tarbula, with her maid-servant, who were both killed in a most cruel manner by being tied to stakes and sawed in twain.

9th May ... In Persia, 310 blessed martyrs.

The hagiographer Alban Butler (1710–1773) wrote in his Lives of the Primitive Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints, under April 22,

Saints Azades, Tharba, and Many Others, Martyrs in Persia

A.D. 341.

In the thirty-second year of king Sapor II, (which Sozomen and others from him call, by an evident mistake, the thirty-third,) on Good-Friday, which fell that year on the 17th day of April, according to our solar year, the same day on which Saint Simeon and his companions suffered, a most cruel edict was published in Persia, inflicting on all Christians the punishment of instant death or slavery, without any trial or form of judicature. The swords of the furious were every where unsheathed; and Christians looked upon slaughter as their glory, and courageously went

out to meet it. They had even in this life the advantage of their enemies, who often trembled or were fatigued, while the persecuted professors of the truth stood unshaken. "The cross grew and budded upon rivers of blood," says Saint Maruthas; "the troops of the saints exulted with joy, and, being refreshed by the sight of that saving sign, were themselves animated with fresh vigour, and inspired others continually with new courage. They were inebriated by drinking the waters of divine love, and produced a new offspring to succeed them." From the sixth hour on Good-Friday to the second Sunday of Pentecost, that is, Low-Sunday, (the Syrians and Chaldeans calling all the space from Easter-day to Whitsunday, Pentecost,) the slaughter was continued without interruption. The report of this edict no sooner reached distant cities, than the governors threw all the Christians into prisons, to be butchered as soon as the edict itself should be sent them: and upon its arrival in any place, whoever confessed themselves Christians were stabbed, or had their throats cut upon the spot. The eunuch Azades, a very great favourite with the king, was slain on this occasion; but the king was so afflicted at his death, that he thereupon published another edict, which restrained the persecution from that time to the bishops, priests, monks, and nuns. Great numbers also of the soldiery were crowned with martyrdom, besides innumerable others throughout the whole kingdom. Sozomen computes the number at sixteen thousand; but an ancient Persian writer, published by Renaudot, makes it amount to two hundred thousand.

The queen, in the mean time, fell dangerously ill. The Jews, to whom she was very favourable, easily persuaded her that her sickness was the effect of a magical charm or spell, employed by the sisters of the blessed Simeon, to be revenged for their brother's death. One was a virgin, called Tharba, whom Henschenius and Ruinart corruptly call, with the Greeks, Pherbuta. Her sister was a widow, and both had consecrated themselves by vow to God in a state of continency. Hereupon the two sisters were apprehended, and with them Tharba's servant, who was also a virgin. Being accused of bewitching the queen, Tharba replied, that the law of God allowed no more of enchantment than of idolatry. And being told they had done it out of revenge, she made answer, that they had no reason to revenge their brother's death, by which he had obtained eternal life in the kingdom of heaven: revenge being moreover strictly forbidden by the law of God. After this they were remanded to prison. Tharba, being extremely beautiful, one of her judges was enamoured of her. He therefore sent her word the next day, that if she would consent to marry him, he would obtain her pardon and liberty of the king. But she refused the offer with indignation, saying, that she was the spouse of Jesus Christ, to whom she had consecrated her virginity, and committed her life; and that she feared not death, which would open to her the way to her dear brother, and to eternal rest from pain. The other two judges privately made her the like proposals, but were rejected in the same manner. They hereupon made their report to the king, as if they had been convicted of the crime; but he not believing them guilty, was willing their lives should be spared, and their liberty restored to them, on condition they would offer sacrifice to the sun. They declared nothing should ever prevail on them to give to a creature the honour due to God alone; whereupon the Magians cried out, "They are unworthy to live by whose spells the queen is wasting in sickness." And it being left to the Magians to assign their punishments, and determine what death they should be put to, they, out of regard to the queen's recovery, as they pretended, ordered their bodies to be sawn in two, and half of each to be placed on each side of a road, that the queen might pass between them, which, they said, would cure her. Even after this sentence, Tharba's admirer found means to let her know, that it was still in her power to prevent her death, by consenting to marry him. But she cried out with indignation: "Most impudent of men, how could you again entertain such a dishonest thought? For me courageously to die is to live; but life, purchased by baseness, is worse than any death." When they were come to the place of execution, each person was tied to two stakes, and with a saw sawn in two; each half, thus separated, was cut into six parts, and being thrown into so many baskets, were hung on two forked stakes, placed in the figure of half crosses, leaving an open path between them; through which the queen superstitiously passed the same day. Saint Maruthas adds, that no sight could be more shocking or barbarous, than this spectacle of the martyrs' limbs cruelly mangled, and exposed to scorn. They suffered in the year 341.

IMPERIAL BELIEFS AND NUMISMATICS

According to Ammianus Marcellinus, Shapur II fought the Romans in order to "re-conquer what had belonged to his ancestor". It is not known who Shapur II thought his ancestor was, probably the Achaemenids or the legendary Kayanian dynasty. During the reign of Shapur II, the title of "the divine Mazda-worshipping, king of kings of the Iranians, whose image/seed is from the gods" disappears from the coins that were minted. He was also the last Sasanian king to claim lineage from the gods.

Under Shapur II, coins were minted in copper, silver and gold, however, a great amount of the copper coins were made on Roman planchet, which is most likely from the riches that the Sasanians took from the Romans. The weight of the coins also changed from 7.20 g to 4.20 g.

BUILDING ACTIVITY

Besides the construction of the war-i tāzigān near al-Hira, Shapur II is also known to have created several other cities. He created a royal city called Eranshahr-Shapur, where he settled Roman prisoners of war. He also rebuilt and repopulated Nisibis in 363 with people from Istakhr and Spahan. In Asoristan, he founded Wuzurg-Shapur ("Great Shapur"), a city on the west side of the Tigris. He also rebuilt Susa after having destroyed it when suppressing a revolt, renaming it Eran-Khwarrah-Shapur ("Iran's glory [built by] Shapur").

OFFSPRING

Besides his son Shapur III, Shapur II had a daughter, Zurvandukht, who was named after Zurvan, a deity in Zoroastrianism. She is attested only in the 5th-century Armenian history Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk' as the wife of the Armenian king Khosrov IV.